Rehabilitation of closed sugar mills in Bihar

†32. SHRI MANGANI LAL MANDAL: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that sugar industry in Bihar has completely been closed and destroyed today while at some point of time this State was the largest producer of sugar in the country;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Government have taken fresh initiatives and efforts to rehabilitate all the closed and sick sugar mills in Bihar; and

(c) if so, the complete details thereof in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) No, Sir. In the early 1940s, 28 sugar factories out of 148 sugar factories in the country were in Bihar and this 20% of the sugar industry contributed 26% of the total sugar production of the country. In the current sugar year, 2005-06, 9 private sugar mills out of 28 sugar mills are in operation, collectively contributing to 2% of the total sugar production in the country. However, 15 sugar mills of Bihar State Sugar Corporation, 3 sugar mills of BIC Group and 1 sugar mill of private sector are lying closed.

(b) and (c) It is the responsibility of the entrepreneur to take steps to reactivate/revive the closed sugar mills as per techno economic viability of the project.

Buffer stock of wheat

33. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the buffer stock of wheat is alarmingly low leading to rise in prices of wheat;

(b) if so, the foodgrain stock available with Government, as on January, 2006;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) whether this stock is sufficient to meet the demand till next harvesting;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the preventive steps taken in this regard and also in regard to check price rise of essential foodgrains?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The foodgrains stock in the Central Pool as on 1.1.2006 was as under:—

(Figures in lakh tonnes)

	Stocks
Wheat	61.88
Rice	126.41
Coarse Grains	4.31
TOTAL:	192.60

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The stock of foodgrains as on 1.1.2006 is sufficient to meet the demands till next harvesting, taking into consideration the average monthly requirement of 19 lakh tonnes of Rice and 14 lakh tonnes of Wheat under Targeted Public Distribution System, Welfare Schemes and Open Market Sales.

(e) In order to keep a check on rise in prices of essential foodgrains, Open Market Sales Schemes (Domestic) is being operated under which foodgrains are released in the market by Food Corporation of India (FCI) from time to time. In addition, a decision has been taken to import 5 lakh tonnes of wheat in the Southern Ports through the STC which would improve the domestic availability of wheat and help in stabilising wheat prices.

Strengthening Forward Markets Commission

34. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are thinking of amending the Forward Contract (Regulation) Act, 1952 to strengthen and restructure the Forward Markets Commission;